



> FOR SOCIETY

QUALITY ACCORDING TO FONTYS

Framework for quality and quality assurance 2024

September 2024

Fontys Education & Research



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> QUALITY ACCORDING TO FONTYS

At Fontys, we regard quality as a dynamic process that is shaped every day in the practice of our study programmes and research. Delivering quality also means renewing and innovating. Our study programmes and our organisation are constantly evolving to fulfil the mission of Fontys: together with and for the (regional) professional field of work, we provide high-quality higher vocational education and carry out innovative, practically oriented research. In this way, we contribute to develop a vital, inclusive and sustainable society.

Our quality assurance is aimed at improving and accounting for educational quality through trust and coordination with each other. Quality assurance is facilitating by nature and primarily serves the educational quality we aim to achieve. In a large organisation like Fontys, this requires a balance between collective agreements on the one hand and the flexibility to translate these agreements to the different parts of our organisation on the other.

The purpose of this framework is to give boards and management of institutes clarity about the quality of accredited education and the associated quality assurance that they need to organise and achieve. It thus provides direction and frameworks for an institute's quality policy.

This document was created in consultation with the institutes and services and has been reviewed by the various parties involved in quality assurance. The framework builds on what we are already doing and is an impetus to strengthen our quality assurance.

This framework is supported by a dashboard, a process description and a toolbox. The dashboard provides comprehensive information on educational quality. The process description details how we design the quality assurance process. The toolbox provides guides, tools and inspiration that can help in setting up processes and working toward a strong culture of quality.

Five principles of quality assurance

Our quality assurance is based on five principles, which indicate to all parties involved what we as Fontys consider to be the minimum standard of educational quality and how we organise our quality assurance in general terms ('ensuring and securing'). Each principle consists of a set of basic agreements.

1. We deliver the quality we promise and that our stakeholders expect

As an organisation, we deliver the quality that our mandate and strategy promise and that our stakeholders expect. Quality based on this mandate can be traced back to a number of basic agreements. These are founded on what is nationally considered basic quality and the level of quality we strive for at Fontys.

The basic agreements:

We are accreditation-worthy at all times

Fontys and all of our study programmes are at all times eligible for accreditation and thus comply with the accreditation standards (NVAO and ESG), as well as the relevant laws and regulations.

We work in accordance with the frameworks and systems of Fontys

Each study programme works within the frameworks and in accordance with processes and systems agreed upon and facilitated within Fontys.

We follow the five principles of learning

Each study programme shapes education according to the five principles of learning.

- Everyone is challenged to discover and develop their talents to their full potential.
- Wherever possible, learning takes place in an authentic learning environment.
- Learning is acquiring knowledge and skills, exploring and experiencing together.
- The student is the owner of their learning process.
- Learning takes place in an environment where the ability to study is prioritised.

We connect research and education

Each study programme uses research from within and outside Fontys to strengthen the content of education and to contribute to innovation in the field of work and society.

2. We base our strong culture of quality on ownership, dialogue and collaboration

Fontys is an agile, dynamic society. We are a community of flexible professionals - lecturers, managers, support staff - who stand for a strong quality culture. This demands readiness for change, collegiality and cooperation, shared responsibility and commitment, open communication and trust. This requires ownership, dialogue and cooperation between all those involved, both with internal and external stakeholders, in order to continuously fine-tune the quality of education.

The basic agreements:

We show (collective) ownership

Every employee shows responsibility and accountability: we show personal leadership. We are learning professionals, based on the Fontys roles. Each employee is part of one or more teams. Within these, we take collective ownership in the context of the entire study programme.

We engage in meaningful dialogue with stakeholders

We engage purposefully in discussions on the right topics with the right knowledge and the right stakeholders. We ensure that every employee can give meaning to quality thanks to the dialogue we have with stakeholders. In addition, we learn from and with peers as critical friends.

We work together in a goal-oriented manner

Every employee works together with colleagues, students and partners in the field of work to achieve strong educational quality. We do this by working in a goal-oriented manner towards organisational and study goals with a reflective and constructive attitude. Together, we work to create an open, development-oriented culture.

3. We are transparent about the quality we achieve

Improvement, innovation and accountability require visibility of the quality we achieve, for our stakeholders and for ourselves. To this end, institutes and services work with quantitative and qualitative markers. These provide rich information about the quality achieved and are helpful in the discussion between stakeholders.

The basic agreements:

We follow external frameworks and national evaluations

For external accountability, Fontys opts for the system of an Institutional Quality Assurance Audit (ITK) with Limited Programme Assessment (accreditations by the NVAO). We also provide transparency to our stakeholders about everything we do through our website and board report.

Fontys also participates in the nationwide National Student Survey (NSE), the national alumni survey HBO-Monitor (Higher Professional Monitor) and Kunstenmonitor (Arts Monitor).

We carry out internal evaluations at regular intervals

Institutes and services follow the Fontys-wide evaluation moments and they also establish an annual evaluation and research calendar detailing how they collect information from stakeholder groups and conduct research for the core processes.

Institutes conduct an internal quality review for each study programme at least once every six years, midway through a study programme's accreditation term. In the review, they reflect on their quality results and quality processes, and look ahead to the coming period. The reviews are part of an institution's planning and control cycle, and the overall results are included in the macon/marap cycle.

Periodically, the Audit team conducts internal audits. Services conduct periodic (usually annual) analyses of key characteristics based on quality information, such as quality reviews, accreditation reports, annual examination board reports and annual reports by the study programme committee.

Sharing information is a given

Information sharing with all parties is a matter of course. There is a 'collect and share obligation', meaning that quality information is made available to those who need to work with it and those individuals actively seek out this information as well.

4. We work on quality in a systematic, traceable and development-oriented manner

We ensure and safeguard quality. We do this by evaluating at set times, in a clear manner, and determining the next steps. This is why we work with the macon/marap (management contract/management report) cycle, record core processes and use a quality cycle in which we connect the reflective PDCA to our innovation processes.

The basic agreements:

We use the macon/marap cycle and translate it to study programme level

Based on their own context, institutes annually translate the Fontys course and objectives into a management contract (macon). They discuss progress and realisation using management reports (maraps) and the quality dashboard. The institute translates the agreements from the macon to the internal organisation. In this context, the unity of the study programme is recognisable. The marap is also used to evaluate whether agreements made have been followed up.

We establish core processes based on frameworks set by Fontys

Each institute has established core processes based on the various frameworks set by Fontys. At a minimum, these are:

- (1) the process of (continuing) development and establishment of the education and the educational and examination regulations (OER);
- (2) The process of admission, study progress and graduation;
- (3) The process of review and assessment.

A quality cycle has been established for each of these core processes.

We work according to the reflective PDCA cycle

We employ the reflective PDCA cycle. This means we Plan, Do and Check, but Reflect before we Act. We record the agreements (policies), monitoring and accountability in a traceable way for all involved. Institutes decide for themselves how they do this, for example in our Digital Quality Portfolio (DKP).

We innovate using evidence-informed information and apply quality by design

In educational innovation, we work on the basis of information retrieved from research and practice (evidence informed). In addition, when designing education, we adopt a systematic process of formulating minimum quality goals during the design process. We involve stakeholders and relevant committees (participation, etc.) in educational innovation. Throughout the process, we collect and reflect on quality information so that we can systematically see if we are meeting our quality goals and make adjustments as needed. In this way, we ensure during the design process that our education meets the quality we promise (quality by design).

5. We work based on clear tasks, roles and responsibilities at all levels

Strong quality assurance requires clear agreements about responsibilities concerning quality and a strong organisation in which all those involved are facilitated and directed to assume their responsibility.

The basic agreements:

We follow the board and management regulations

The management and control of the organisation, including the planning and control cycle, is set up in accordance with the [board and management regulations](#).

We organise quality assurance responsibilities along three established lines

We organise responsibilities for quality assurance according to three established lines. This is also called the three lines of defence model. Executive board, faculties and management are the 'first line': this layer bears responsibility for achieving organisational goals, quality management and risk management. The services department is the 'second line' and have a role as process owners. Team quality owns the quality assurance process at the institution level. This means that it prescribes the main features of the process, supports implementation with the deployment of quality consultants, tools and systems, and monitors whether the process as a whole is going well. In the quality assurance process, there are a number of components on which agreements are made within Fontys, namely education and examination regulations, evaluations, quality reviews, accreditations and the operation of the examination board and participation. The operation of the quality assurance process is monitored through meetings and by conducting key characteristics analyses on reports or other documents. These systematic analyses provide overarching insight into the quality of our quality assurance. This is used for further professionalisation of the organisation and to identify Fontys-wide risks for management and the executive board. Audits are conducted for additional assurance. This internal audit function ('third line') reviews and judges on whether the first and second lines are functioning properly. Audits are conducted independently, as described in the [Audit Charter](#).

We define tasks, roles and responsibilities

Each institute has defined the tasks, roles and responsibilities regarding the quality of study programmes and everything associated, and represents this schematically (in a RACI model, for example). At least the roles, tasks and responsibilities for the three core processes are described, as mentioned in the basic agreements of principle 4 and the quality assurance process.

We allocate sufficient time and resources for quality assurance

The institute owns the quality assurance process at the institutional and study programme level and organises it in a professional manner. Quality professionals are facilitated and positioned to properly fulfil their responsibilities.

We organise and facilitate strong employee participation

We organise and facilitate strong employee participation. At each institute and for each study programme or group of study programmes, employee participation (employee participation council and study programme committee) has been set up in accordance with the applicable legal frameworks established by Fontys, as described in the

[Participation Councils and Study Programme Committees regulations](#). The centre for employee participation is there to support management and employee participation, such as the institute participation council (IMR) and study programme committees (OCs) at institutes.

We have qualified, independent examination boards

Each study programme or group of programmes has an qualified examination board that functions independently. The organisation and functioning complies with the legal and Fontys-established frameworks, as described in the [examination board framework memorandum](#). Examination boards are supported by the multidisciplinary Examination Boards team.

We structurally involve the field of work

Each study programme or group of study programmes sets up structural coordination with the field of work at the strategic and tactical levels.